

# Messenger of Peace.

"GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST, AND ON EARTH PEACE, GOOD WILL TOWARD MEN."

EDITED BY RICHARD CARRIQUE.—ASHBEL STODDARD, PRINTER.

VOL. I.

HUDSON, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 18, 1824.

No. 21.

## SUNDAY SCHOOL UNION OF COLUMBIA AND GREENE COUNTIES.

We have recently perused the "Constitution of the Sunday School Union for Columbia and Greene Counties;" and "a system for the internal regulation of Sunday Schools." As great exertions are made to introduce a general system throughout the United States for getting up and supporting these Sunday Schools, and as the managers are laboring to obtain the management and direction of our common schools so far as to introduce such books as they choose for the use and instruction of the pupil, thus striving to bend the youthful mind to their religious views and opinions, we feel it to be our indispensable duty to offer a few remarks on the manner in which it is proposed to conduct those Sunday Schools, and on the apparent designs of the managers in getting them up. We are sensible that the advocates for Sunday Schools will not thank us for our remarks, and that it is possible we may come under their censure for interfering in those concerns. But these gentlemen must remember, especially those of them who consider themselves as "WATCHMEN" placed on the walls of Zion, that they believe it to be their indispensable duty to lift up the warning voice on the approach of error, and to give due notice of the appearance of whatever may tend to destroy the peace of the children of men whether in time, or in eternity; and that if they do not prove faithful in the trust reposed in them, all the evils resulting from their negligence will be required at their hands. Or, to use their own phrase the blood of souls will be required at the hand of the unfaithful Watchman. Persuaded of this imperious duty of faithfulness, the Clergy have taken great latitude in opposing and condemning the sentiments of those who differ from them in matters of faith. Let them for once exercise a spirit of candour and charity, and believe that others may be governed by the same upright motives, by which they themselves act, and feel the same obligation to warn men of the dangers which beset them and of the evils, which dressed in the garments of light, are surrounding them and their children; evils, which if not now counteracted, will visit posterity through numerous generations. We assure the friends of these Sunday Schools, that it is not the establishment of those schools that we find fault with, but the manner in which they are conducted, the obvious design being not so much

to instruct the pupil in those elementary branches of education, that will render them useful in life, as to infix upon the mind certain religious views and opinions; thus bending "the twig" to certain doctrines that "the tree" may more readily incline to them in advanced life.

We would freely lend our aid to any measures that could be adopted to instruct, and to lead the way to usefulness, calling into exercise all the mental and moral powers of the youth, and also to prevent that violation of the Sabbath and disregard for the good and wholesome law of our country in relation to the observance of that day; but we cannot lend our aid to measures evidently calculated, if not designed, to enslave the mind, and to produce a belief in particular creeds taught in Catechisms, and doctrines propagated in tracts and by the illustrations and explanations the teacher may choose to give on those passages of scripture read as lessons.

In the system of internal regulation for the management of Sunday schools, it is directed that the first class shall read the New-Testament and catechism. The second class, the Sunday School Spelling Book, and Hymn Book. The third class the Sunday School Spelling Book, the fourth class Alphabetical cards. In what, this "SUNDAY SCHOOL SPELLING Book" differs from other Spelling Books in common use we know not, never having seen it, but we presume that it has been compiled and arranged to teach the orthodox sentiments of the day, and that it differs from other books of the kind, in being designed to teach those dogma's supported and upheld by the advocates for the school. In the system of REGULATIONS the duties of children are pointed out. In the morning the first class must recite from the New-Testament, that portion committed to memory during the past week, after which read a chapter or two, and attend to the instruction given by the teacher. In the afternoon recite catechism, answer questions from the same, read and spell out of the Testament. No further proof is needed to show, that although the ostensible design in getting up Sunday Schools, is to educate poor children, and to teach them a due regard for the Sabbath, yet the real design is to obtain an influence over their minds by imprinting thereon, in tender infancy or youth, those tenets which will grow with their growth, strengthen with strength and cause them in more advanced life to receive those doctrines believed in by the orthodox. The prejudices imbibed by early

education are well known, and the impressions made on the mind in youth are known to be erased with difficulty. Sentiments of religion therefore, which will not bear investigation, that will not endure the exercise of reason, are the more easily propagated among those whose minds are prepared by early education to receive the doctrine advanced and to take it without the least examination. That we are correct in our opinion as to the real design in getting up their schools will appear evident, if we notice who those are, that are the instructors. They are generally young people, possessed of more zeal than knowledge, and more confidence than prudence and experience—who, perhaps, have very recently joined the church, and who, in their zeal, wanting to do something for God, step forward for teachers of Sunday Schools. These young people may be competent to hear children read or recite their catechism, but it is hardly supposable that they possess that knowledge of the scriptures necessary to render them competent to give instruction to the pupils on religious subjects, more especially on points of doctrine and to explain the divine word with that accuracy and consistency as to give the pupil those correct ideas which will enable him to give to every one that asketh him a reason of the hope that is in him with meekness and fear. It is well known that many, who become teachers, are unable to give a reason of their own faith and hope, aside from what they call their experience, and are quite ignorant of the scriptures, and totally incapable of explaining them satisfactorily to any candid and inquiring person; yet these are the instructors, who, having heard our children read from the New Testament, are to instruct them from that volume.

In addition to the instruction given by the teacher to the first class on their reading a chapter or two from the Testament, "ten minutes," before the hour of dismission, are to be devoted to religious instruction. By whom is this instruction to be given? by teachers incompetent to perform the duty and who, deluded by a zeal which is not according to knowledge, will be sure to work upon the passions and feelings of the children and terrify them by representing the eternal Father of their Spirits as a Being revengeful and implacable, full of wrath and anger, and ready to devote them to endless burnings.

Under the head of "Punishments" instructors are informed that their "great concern in every case of misconduct should be to produce a cordial concern for the fault. Great pains should be taken in every instance of moral delinquency to convince them (the scholars) that their offence is chiefly against God and not merely in opposition to the rules of the school, or the will of the teacher. It should be represented as a sin to be confessed to God, and for which there is no pardon, but through the blood of the Saviour. Great judgement should be exercised

in endeavoring to conduct the whole business of punishment in such a manner as shall be least likely to irritate or exasperate the feelings of the delinquent." From the above we learn the state of abject slavery to which it is intended to reduce the minds of children, keeping them in continual awe and dread of their Heavenly Father and in fear of their teachers, to offend whom, they are to be taught, is to offend God. It is said that "great pains should be taken in every instance of moral delinquency to convince them their offence is committed CHIEFLY against God, and not merely in opposition to the rules of the school, or the will of the teacher." By "moral delinquency" in this sentence we are to understand, neglect in attending Sunday Schools—coming a little too late, or not at all, in a morning or afternoon—not committing to memory the given portion of scripture, catechism or hymn—not behaving well in Church or in School; or not yielding implicit attention to the will of the teacher. Such delinquencies as these, the children are to be taught are offences against God, for which there is no "PARDON but through the BLOOD of the Saviour." Is it possible that a person can be found in this age of the world who really believes that if a child of six, eight, ten or twelve years of age do not implicitly obey the will of his teacher, or commit to memory a chapter from the Testament—a section from the catechism; or a hymn, he offends God in that degree that nothing but the blood of the Saviour can atone for it. If they do not thus believe, why this "GREAT PAINS" to teach children that which is false in order to produce obedience. It has too long been the practice of parents to attempt to govern their children and produce obedience by falsehoods, frightening them by terrific objects which never had existence but in the wild imagination of ignorant people. For this mode of government they have to thank their Clergy, who having for centuries labored to bring people into the profession of religion by the fearful apprehensions of eternal torments, and to persuade them that without the fear of hell there would be no incentive to virtue, have induced parents to imitate the divine government, and to believe it the safest way to govern their children by threatenings and to awe them into obedience by the fear of some terrible object that stands ready to carry them off and devour them if they disobey. Thus children have been brought up the abject slaves of superstitious ignorance, instead of having the early impressions of love to their earthly and heavenly parents fixed in their hearts, and made obedient by that reverence and godly fear which is the fruit of love.

It is said in the system of regulations, "It would be well if Sunday Schools could be conducted without rewards of a pecuniary nature, but we find it impracticable." It has been impracticable to conduct those schools without pecuniary rewards to stimulate the scholar to exertion in study, and to obedience

to the rules of the school, why is it recommended to continue to pursue a system which has been productive of no good effect. If the persuasion that every offence committed against the rules of the school, or the will of the teacher is of a moral nature, committed against God and renders them deserving of endless misery, will not produce obedience and stimulate to exertion, why continue to teach it to children.

It has been found "impracticable" to conduct Sunday Schools without pecuniary rewards: This *impracticability* we presume has been found by actual experience; then let the reward be such as will produce the necessary emulation in the mind of the scholar and all will be effected that can be required, without teaching them that if they happen to stay from school half a day, or do not commit to memory the given lesson, they offend God, for which offence they are in danger of being consigned to endless wrath in the flames of hell. This instruction, which the teacher is to take great pains to give, will not be given up as it is a part of the system intended to enslave the minds of the rising generation and to fix thereon the awful idea of the wrath of an angry God which will make them in advanced life the more ready victims to those doctrines that cannot withstand the light of investigation, but which, when tried by scripture and good sense, melt away like wax before the fire.

We apprehend that it will be found equally impracticable to conduct the school by the pecuniary rewards proposed by the means which have been heretofore pursued. Let us, for a moment, examine the rewards which are designed to encourage the scholar to study and obedience. The first class, for every six verses of scripture recited, one "blue ticket," and for every page of catechism, one "blue ticket". Second class, for being present at roll call, one "blue ticket," and for every hymn recited, one "blue ticket." Third and fourth classes, for punctual attendance, one "blue ticket" and for good behaviour through the day one "blue ticket." "Six blue tickets equal to one red, and one red ticket equal to half a cent in value."

A scholar may with very great exertions obtain six blue tickets in one day, which will very seldom be the case, and thus be entitled to one red ticket equal in value to ONE HAFL CENT. This must, certainly, hold forth great encouragement to the scholar, especially when he learns how these tickets are to be redeemed. "The tickets should be redeemed every three months with religious books or tracts." The child then having, with great exertions, obtained ten or a dozen red tickets in three months equal in value to five or six cents, is to be rewarded with a religious book or tract of the same value as the tickets to be redeemed. We know not how handsomely these tickets may be printed so as to take the fancy of children, but surely, aside from the influence the appearance of the ticket has upon the mind, or an emulation which may exist to see who shall ob-

tain the most tickets, there is nothing of a pecuniary nature to raise the ambition of the child.

It will be seen by every observing mind that one great design in these Sunday Schools is to proselyte children to sectarian views, and to prejudice them in favor of calvinistic doctrines, the very tickets which are given them having certain texts of scripture printed upon them, and those passages such as are most relied upon in favor of endless misery which the child is directed to commit to memory, and when he has had them long enough to have them impressed in indelible characters upon his mind, they are replaced with tracts or other works calculated to keep him under the influence of the doctrine of endless misery and interminable woe. It is complained that the means, of granting these pecuniary rewards, are so small that they are obliged to make use of articles of small value, we are however of the opinion that this school system, is a branch of that speculating scheme into which the Clergy have entered with much zeal, and in which they have been very successful, and is closely connected with Missionary, Bible, Tract and other societies of like nature. In this we may be mistaken, yet we shall attempt in the next number to offer our reasons for thus believing, that the Sunday School, like the other societies mentioned, is a speculating scheme.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "MESSENGER OF PEACE."

SIR,

In your paper of Oct. 23, 1824, you attempt to answer some queries of L. W. on Matt. xxv. 31, 32, 33 and 46. My principal question was on v. 46, viz. "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal." And I agreed that, if it could be shown that this punishment did not apply to the wicked after death, I would renounce my belief of the eternal punishment of the wicked after death. I did not think of entering into controversy on this all-important subject when I made those queries and assertions; they were made at the request of a neighbor who knew my sentiments, and set down in writing, without ever expecting to hear from them again, especially in a public Newspaper; but there is no harm done. I should not now reply, but you seem to have laid me under a necessity; for in your introductory remarks you observe, "And should he discover any error in our reasoning, or deficiency in the proof presented, he will confer a favor by pointing out the error and showing us that what we considered as proof, was not sufficient to convince a fair, candid and impartial juror bound to decide the fact according to evidence rather than from preconceived opinions formed from the rumors that have floated around him, and given a bias to his judgment." Your request is reasonable, and the rule you have laid down, which ought to govern our deci-

ion is just. My business, therefore, is merely to examine the evidence you have adduced; and that may be confined to one single point, viz. whether you have proved by sufficient evidence that the punishment mentioned in verse 46, does not apply to the wicked after death, in which is contained all the importance of my first queries. To the 2d—What time is meant, when the Son of man shall come, v. 31? You answer—"When he should appear in judgment against the Jews at the destruction of Jerusalem. At which time the dispensation of the Mosaic law closed, the Levitical priesthood was abolished, and the house of Israel scattered abroad, ceased to enjoy the privileges of a distinct and separate nation." You then refer to the introduction of our Saviour's discourse, commencing with the 24th chapter, where he speaks of the destruction of the Temple, and goes on to answer the questions of his disciples, as to the sign of his coming and the end of the world. This same subject you assert begins with the 24th chapter and ends with the 25th. This you believe from the similarity of language used in both as to the coming of the Son of man. You also refer to Matt. chap. xiv. verses 27, 28, and also to the 8th chapt. Mark—and because it is said by our Saviour, Matt. xxiv, 34, 35, "Verily, I say unto you, this generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away but my words shall not pass away." You conclude that this punishment was fulfilled in that generation.

You suppose it may be objected that the passages, cited by you from other chapters, do not belong to the same subject, and therefore not included among those things which were to be fulfilled in that generation. I make no such objection, it is perfectly right to cite any passages in any chapter or book in the New Testament; it is immaterial in what chapter or book the passage is found, but simply, whether it be in connexion with the passage under consideration—whether in fact it be on the same subject. I therefore admit that your mode of proof is perfectly fair; provided you cite no passages but such as *are* in connexion. Now because that in the several passages before alluded to—the coming of the Son of man, judging every man according to his works, &c. is spoken of, as well as in the passage under consideration in Matt. 25th. You conclude therefore the passages are all in connexion, and were fulfilled in that generation in the destruction of the City and Temple of Jerusalem, rejection and dispersion of the Jews, and the Gentiles admitted to gospel privileges, &c.—And if your premises be correct, your conclusion is irresistible. And I admit you have argued the cause ably and ingeniously.

Now, Sir, I deny that the 25th chapter is a continuation of the subject of the 24th chap. 1st. Because I can see no necessary connexion between them, nay, the subject seems to my understanding to be changed, except one

single passage, viz. the coming of the Son of man with all his holy angels, and this I conclude does not prove that his coming was at the same time and for the same purpose as in the other passages cited.

And I shall show by other passages, that there certainly is another coming of the Son of man spoken of in the New Testament; that could not have any reference to the destruction of Jerusalem, neither have been fulfilled in that generation. As Rev. i. 7. "Behold he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him and they also which pierced him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him, even so, Amen." Also, Rev. xx, 12. "And I saw the dead, small and great stand before God, and the books were opened and another book was opened which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which are written in the books according to their works."

The above passages certainly relate to the coming of Christ and judging the world, and are long after the destruction of Jerusalem, dispersion of Jews &c.

2d. After a careful examination of Matt. xxv. I cannot see as one word is said respecting, or which can rationally be applied to the destruction of Jerusalem or dispersion of the Jews—and the very conclusion of the chapter shows that the coming of the Son of man there spoken of was for a different purpose, and it is no where said in the whole chapter that all these things should be fulfilled in that generation.

3d. I cannot believe that this coming of the Son of man meant the same coming as in chapter 24, and others cited—for how plainly does he in the former speak of the destruction of the city and Temple, &c.—and there was a literal fulfilment, even to their not leaving one stone upon another: but not a word on this subject in the 25th chapter—and for this obvious reason as I conceive, because that was not the subject, and therefore we can account for the very different language and conclusion. Another reason why I believe the 25th chapter, is not in connexion with the 24th and others preceding, is, that in the 31st v. of the 24th chapter, Our Lord says, "when the Son of man shall come, &c." But in the 34th and 40th, "then shall the king say, &c" "And the king shall answer," Thus it would seem that, as he approaches the judgment seat, he assumes the dignity and authority of a King, and in v. 41, addresses those whom he had placed on the left hand in this awful language, "Depart ye cursed into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels."

Now I would ask, what took place at the destruction of Jerusalem, or in its consequences as respects the Jews which has the least similitude to this denunciation? And in verse 46, "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal." I cannot believe our Lord, who could neither

lie nor deceive, would use such language as in these two passages, to signify temporal evils only, as you suppose. For if the punishment here mentioned apply to this life only, I cannot see any fulfillment in that generation, unless it be fulfilled on the righteous as well as upon the wicked; or rather fulfilled upon the righteous more than the wicked: for troubles, trials, bonds, imprisonment, hanging and burning have been the portion of the righteous from that day to this. Therefore I cannot see but that, if we suppose any fulfilment in that generation, the righteous must have been the ones intended, by what he calls cursed, who were to depart into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels (the wicked,) who have been burning the righteous from generation to generation. Again, if the punishment had referred only to this life, in that case our Lord would not have declared any new thing, because the same afflictions had awaited the righteous ever since God had a people on earth to serve him. For, Heb. xi. 36, 37.—“And others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonments, they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword,” &c. Yea, the smoke of the torment of the righteous, (if we can discover between the righteous and wicked) in this world, has been ascending up from age to age until this day; though we have reason to believe it has somewhat abated. Yet, notwithstanding, all these afflictions in this life the righteous have been sustained by a righteous God to endure all these, “for they endured as seeing him who is invisible.”

For God is ever ready to sustain his children under every trial, enabling them to encounter all the difficulties which beset them at the present day, as he did also his servants of old; those “who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, &c. &c. &c.”

Yet, Sir, I believe that, although the wicked, in this life, receive their good things and the righteous their evil things, yet the time is coming when these shall be comforted, and those tormented; or that, “These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.”

You say, in Matt. xxv, it is said, “Come ye blessed—for I was an hungered and ye gave me meat, &c.” and remark, “If eternal salvation is intended in this place, then, that salvation is predicated on *works* which completely contradicts the assertions of Paul, who says, ‘Not of works’—‘not according to our works.’” I do not understand it so, that by the passage above, salvation is predicated on *works*, although I believe it means eternal life, or salvation. The passage entire, stands thus. “Then shall the king say unto them, on his right hand, come ye blessed of my Father, in-

herit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” Therefore this inheritance could not be predicated on *works*, but on the grace of God. Yet the judgment will be according to their works, I understand so from the whole of the gospel. I believe all the passages you cite on this subject as fully as you can; to mention one, will suffice, Eph. ii. 7, 9. “For by grace are ye saved thro’ faith, and that, not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works lest any man should boast.” Notwithstanding, that salvation is by *grace*, yet we see it must also be *through faith*, for Paul tells us, Heb. xi. 6, “But without *faith* it is impossible to please *him*; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”

I therefore believe that, though it be by *grace* through *faith* yet that we must believe also that he is a *rewarder* of them that diligently seek him. But 2 Thes. iii. 2. “For all men have not *faith*” without which we have seen, it is impossible to please God. We see also in the passage before cited Rev. xx. 12. That the dead, small and great, were to be judged out of the books according to their works. Even faith cannot save us although without it we cannot please God. For James says Chap. ii. 14, “What doth it profit, any brethren, though a man saith he hath faith and have not works? can faith save him? 17 Even so faith, if it have not works, is dead, being alone. 26. For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.” Christ reveals to John. Rev. xxii. 12. “And he that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous let him be righteous still: And behold I come quickly and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his works shall be.” This you will recollect was long after the destruction of Jerusalem and dispersion of the Jews, and his coming was then future, which I leave you to consider; I will also add that our Lord here assures John that his reward was with him to give every man according as his work should be. You say, “The question then returns, Where will this punishment have an end? We answer in the language of Paul to the Romans, xi. 25—26. For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery (lest ye should be wise in your own conceit,) that blindness in part is happened unto Israel, until the fullness of the gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved, as it is written, there shall come out of Zion the deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.” You then request me to read the whole xi Chap, which I have done, and if permitted will do it again and again. I have also read the ix. and x. both of which I take to be in strict connection with the xi. And I believe as firmly as you can that all Israel shall be saved. But also as in Chap. xi. 6. “Not as though the word of God had taken none

effect. For they are not all Israel which are of Israel, 7. Neither because they are the seed of Abraham are they all children ;—but in Isaac shall thy seed be called ; That is they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God : but the children of the promise are counted for the seed." Gal.iii. 29. " And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." And so xi.2. " God hath not castaway his people which he foreknew." But it would seem there will be some whom Christ will not know, as in Matt. xxv. 12. " But he answered and said, verily I say unto you I know you not"—and also in Luke xiii. 23—28. " Where said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved ? And he said unto them strive to enter in at the strait gate ; for many I say unto you will seek to enter in and shall not be able.— When once the master of the house hath risen up and shut the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door saying, Lord, Lord open unto us : and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are. Then shall ye begin to say, we have eaten and drunken in thy presence and thou hast taught in our streets. But he shall say ; I tell you, I know you not whence ye are : depart from me all ye workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out." This I suppose to be in connexion with the xxv Chap. of Matt. and therefore in point.

The burden of proof was on you, Sir, viz. that the everlasting punishment in the passage under consideration did not apply to the wicked after death: not merely to make it appear probable, but to prove the fact with sufficient evidence to warrant a fair, candid and impartial Juror to decide the point in your favor. I do not say I am such Juror, but still must decide for myself, according to my honest convictions and believe that if I decide otherwise it would be lying to God and not to man, with this view I am bound to declare that, you have not, to my understanding, proved that this punishment applied to the Jews, &c. and pertaineth only to this life, and therefore you have not proved that it does not apply to the wicked after death, for the reasons before offered and the scripture before cited.

I have not taken notice of what Bishop Newton says, because his remarks apply only to the xxiv. Chap. which I consider not in connexion, and because also, my rule is to compare the scripture, and let it supply its own comments. He may, or may not be correct, but his opinion is not binding on either you or me. His opinion is neither the Law nor the Testimony. Neither have I had recourse to any other commentator. For I have been taught that the word of God is the surest, nay the only sure word of prophesy. 2 Peter i. 20. Knowing this first that no prophesy of the scripture

is of any private interpretation. To our own master we stand or fall by his word we must be judged, and not by the doctrines and commandments of men. I am glad of the assistance of those who are more wise, more learned and more experienced than myself, of whom there are multitudes around me ; their opinions may assist me in the investigation of a subject, but not cited as authority. We are forbidden to call them Father or Master. Though we may esteem them as more able brethren. So that before I adopt the opinions of other men on the subject of religion, I endeavor carefully to compare them with the unerring Rule, and adopt or reject as that shall dictate. I have decided as well as I am able : And now my Dear Sir, I will put the question to you, who have an equal right to decide for yourself. If your eternal salvation depended upon the correctness of your decisions, or if your natural life, or even your temporal ease and comfort during the short remnant of this your pilgrimage were to rest upon the correctness of your decision, would you have the courage to decide the point in your own favor ? You certainty would not hesitate if you knew such decision would be correct, or in other words, if it were supported by sufficient evidence to remove all reasonable doubt.

I do not know as I am impartial, in my decision though I think so : I was once on your side of the question, and no human being was able to confute me ; yet I was conquered and no human being was able to rescue me from the power of the conqueror. To conclude, I am willing that the doctrine of Universal Salvation should be true, if that be God's plan of grace, " not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance," receive the pardon of all their sins, and enjoy everlasting felicity. And that you and I may be saved by grace through faith, and that not of ourselves, but the gift of God, and make up a part of that happy throng of the " redeemed of the Lord who shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy on their heads" is the earnest desire of

L. W.

(A reply to the above will appear in our next.)

## MESSENGER OF PEACE.

HUDSON, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 18, 1824.

" If the reasonings of Universalists are conclusive against a state of future punishment after death, may not the same or a similar mode of reasoning be conclusive against a state of salvation after death ? and thus lead us to adopt the old anti-scriptural tenet of the Sadducees, that there is no future state either of rewards or punishments." —Long-Island Farmer.

The bitter and violent opposition which is made to the doctrine of Universal Salvation, although of daily occurrence, is worthy of notice and ought to be exposed. This opposition is not confined to the pulpit, to religious publications, or to common conversation, when

the doctrine of universal grace passes over the mind, but it has become in some degree a matter of course for the editors of the political newspapers of the day, to give their testimony against the doctrine, and whenever they can throw the barbed arrow of detraction, or attempt something like argument in short paragraphs, which sometimes display a want of that candor, which ought ever to attend religious discussions. Universalists have ever been ready to enter into a calm and dispassionate examination of the doctrines they profess, and have often invited the discussion which has most generally been avoided even by those who have been the most clamorous in denouncing the doctrine both as unreasonable and anti-scriptural, and who, in their zeal, have said that it could be refuted with the utmost ease.

The conclusions drawn by the writer in the Long-Island Farmer, may pass with some persons for sound logic, and they may be ready to adopt the tenet of the Sadducees, but it is believed that the more reflecting part of the readers of that paper will discover the absurdity of the conclusions drawn from the principles laid down. The writer makes this inquiry, "If the reasonings of Universalists are conclusive that there is *no state of future punishment after death*, may not the same reasoning be conclusive against *a state of salvation after death?*"—In reply we answer him, No—and feel surprised that such a supposition ever entered his wise head, when the fallacy of it can be so easily detected. The prophet Isaiah saith, chap. xxxv. 10. "The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." And again, ch. xxi. 8. "He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth, for the Lord hath spoken it." Should we, then, take up the argument to prove, and be successful in proving, that God will, according to his promise, "wipe away tears from all faces," and that there will be no more "sorrow nor sighing," will not the same arguments, or similar, prove that there will be no smiles, no peace, no joy, and we, consequently, compelled to believe in a state of negation in which there will be neither sorrow nor joy? Surely not.

Sin is the cause of that misery which is the punishment for sin, consequently, while man continues to sin he will be punished. From sin Jesus came to save us; he came to bless us by turning every one from his iniquities. The amount then of the inquiry before us is this—If Jesus should accomplish the work he came to do, turning all from their iniquities and saving them with an everlasting salvation—will there be any such thing as salvation, must we not believe in the Sadducean doctrine of annihilation.

Should the writer of the article in question, not yet be convinced of the absurdity of his inquiry, we will suppose, for the sake of convincing him, that he is a professor of religion of the orthodox kind, and though resting in the hope of life and immortality, acknowledges himself a sinner; yea, and a hell deserving sinner too—but according to his creed he feels persuaded that at death he will be delivered from this body of sin and death, how, we ask, would he relish the inquiry, whether the arguments which he uses to prove that he will cease to sin, does not equally prove that he will cease to be righteous, and thus an attempt to be made to cause him to give up all hopes of enjoying the pleasures of righteousness, because he is not to be perplexed with the punishment of sin—We are persuaded he would smile at the attempt and consider it puerile and weak.

#### AFFLICTIONS.

Our afflictions in this world are wisely calculated to draw our wandering minds back to the source of all blessings. Were we constantly in the possession of every thing, which to our limited vision appears good, we should become forgetful of the fountains from which we derive existence, and all its enjoyments; and consequently the incense of gratitude would cease to rise from the altar of our hearts. Nothing, but an unwavering confidence in the immutability, power, and goodness of our heavenly Parent, can support us under distress, or give solid and lasting satisfaction. What can better sustain us, than a full and firm conviction, that the omniscient God is our friend, is overruling each event for our advantage, and that he will finally purify and bless every intelligent soul in his vast dominion? Let us then, who are blessed with a belief in this soul-sustaining doctrine, make our lives and conversation testify to its purifying influence in this world, and we shall enjoy a foretaste of that heaven, toward which we believe we are all travelling. And may a conviction, that God loves each individual of

his family with the same unchanging affection, make us abound in charity and kindness to our suffering and wanting brethren; and a remembrance that he has borne with our ingratitude and forgetfulness, and has not withdrawn his bounty, induce us to bear with the ingratitude of earth, and not to refuse the needed assistance, on account of unthankfulness or unkindness. May each affliction we suffer soften our hearts, enliven our gratitude, and increase our perseverance in the path of duty. Then will our lives bear testimony to the renovating influence of the doctrine of God's universal, immutable and impartial love to sinners; and our hearts be filled with that wisdom from above, which is pure, peaceable, gentle, full of mercy, and good fruits; without partiality, and without hypocrisy. In this way, we shall render this pittance of existence as useful and happy as the imperfections of our nature will allow, and our passage through the dark valley will be illuminated by the rays of that hope, which entereth within the veil.—*Relig. Enq.*

### LOVE.

Experience abundantly warrants the assertion, that we cannot love what appears unamiable, or hate what appears lovely; hence it is impossible to love God, while he seems dark and unlovely; while he shows no sympathy for us, and while we can discover no expansion of soul or light of mind in pondering his works or his providence. His paternal character must be seen, his love to his creatures must be felt, or they can never revere him in their souls or make it the business of their existence to resemble him. The goodness or love of God, and that only, leads to repentance, moral improvement, and heavenly joy; consequently it should be held up in all the strength in which men can display it, that the sinner may be softened, reclaimed, and established in the path of virtue and happiness. Mistaken views of God and his revelation have filled the christian world with gloom, as misapprehensions of the true Divinity filled the Pagan world with blood, fire, slaughter, and untameable ferocity. If any would preach a religion that shall unite hearts and spread a cloudless day over the moral world, let him present christianity in its native loveliness, as the image of its divine author, and God will recognize its heavenly origin in the blessings that shall accompany and follow its triumph.—*Ibid.*

Honest indignation in the reprobation of meanness and depravity, is always sure to excite an exalted sentiment in the minds of men. The sincere enforcement of good principles, is among the noblest sources of genuine oratory: he that awakes a more generous love of virtue, and lifts us beyond the ordinary sphere of our moral sensibilities, produces the true results of eloquence.

### POETRY.

#### HYMN.

A PARAPHRASE OF ROMANS XIII. 12.

Ye that indulge in slumber still,  
Rouse and exert each dormant power;  
Hear and obey his sovereign will,  
Who is your life from hour to hour.

Lo! the deep shades of night dissolve;  
High in the East the morning beams;  
He, at whose word the heavens revolve,  
Bids you awake from idle dreams.

Turn to the light a grateful eye,  
Open to ev'ry kindling ray;  
O, may the truth illumine your sky,  
Till the last shade have past away.

Children of God, and heirs of light,  
Born for a high, a glorious end,  
Hate and avoid the deeds of night,  
Not for the world your God offend.

Chaste and devout be every thought,  
Kind and sincere your every word;  
O be your lives without a blot,  
Sacred to Christ, your heavenly Lord.

Thus, when the sun shall fade,  
And the fair heavens shall cease to be,  
You shall enjoy a brighter day,  
Glowing to all eternity.

[*Ch. Discip's.*]

### LIFE IS A VAPOUR.

I dream'd I saw a rosy child,  
With flaxen ringlets in a garden playing:  
Now stopping here, and then afar off straying,  
As flower and butterfly his feet beguiled.

'Twas chang'd—one summer's day I stepp'd aside,  
To let him pass; his face had manhood's seeming.  
And that full eye of blue was fondly beaming  
On a fair maiden, whom he call'd "his bride."

Once more; 'twas evening—and the cheerful fire  
I saw a group of youthful forms surrounding—  
The room with harmless pleasantry resounding;  
And in the midst, I mark'd the smiling sire.

The heavens were clouded! and I heard the tone  
Of a slow moving bell;—*the white hair'd man had gone!*

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### DIED,

In Athens, on the 7th inst. Mrs. MARTHA WILBUR, in the 66th year of her age, wife of Mr. Solomon Wilbur.

In this City, on Tuesday, 7th inst. WILLIAM LA FAYETTE, son of Mr. Cyrus Curtiss, aged 11 months.

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